

Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana

Date **August 30, 2011**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian; Aristide Marshall, Registered Sanitarian;**

Name of Facility **Orleans Parish/LASPCA Animal Shelter**

There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include...

- Louisiana minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities and quarantine facilities, Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana Revised Statutes 2431 et seq.
 - This statute addresses requirements for veterinary treatment of animals, limitations on fees, authority of parish governments to adopt, general shelter standards, shelter construction, shelter operating procedures, sterilization requirements, adoption standards, and branding.
- Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians, Louisiana Revised Statutes , Title 37, Chapter 18B, Louisiana Revised Statutes 1551 et seq.
- The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases, Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III
- American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia (http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf)

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Control Association, the Humane Society of the United States, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians in shelter evaluations. Resources are listed below:

- National Animal Control Association Guidelines (<http://www.nacanet.org/guidelines.html>)
- Humane Society of the United States Guidelines for the Operation of an Animal Shelter (http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/policies_and_guidelines/guidelines_for_animal_shelter_operations.html)
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, Association of Shelter Veterinarians (http://www.sheltervet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks_with%20security.pdf)

The list of questions below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as "**MANDATED**") and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

LAWC Comments and suggestions are added under each item in the assessment.

A. Animal Euthanasia

1. ☒Y ☐N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?

Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:

4. ☒Y ☐N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?
5. ☒Y ☐N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?
8. ☒Y ☐N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?
9. ☐Y ☐N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?
NA
10. ☒Y ☐N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?

Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:

11. ☐Y ☐N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?
NA

B. Management:

1. ☒Y ☐N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?
4. ☒Y ☐N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian?
5. ☐Y ☒N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?
The shelter is routinely inspected annually by the fire marshal. Engineering inspections of the boiler room and mechanical inspections are also performed routinely.
LAWC recommends implementation of a semi-annual inspection program by a parish official or operational unit. The inspection's purpose would be to routinely monitor the management, practices and conditions of the shelter and to assess needs for improvement. In essence, the commission recommends "self regulation" from the government entity that contracts with Louisiana SPCA for animal sheltering.
6. ☒Y ☐N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?
7. ☒Y ☐N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?
8. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?
9. ☐Y ☒N Have staff been immunized against rabies?
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that animal control personnel receive pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis. The vaccine regimen is comparatively expensive and many shelters only administer vaccinations to workers who have been employed for some specified duration (usually 6 months to one year). The Louisiana SPCA should pursue a goal of administering pre-exposure prophylaxis to animal contact shelter employees who complete a probationary tenure of work.
10. ☐Y ☒N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
11. ☐Y ☐N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?
 NA

12. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?
13. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
14. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?
15. ☐Y ☒N Was this shelter a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. ☐Y ☒N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?
Although the New Orleans/Orleans Parish Animal Shelter abides by city and parish ordinances in issues related to licensing, impoundment, dangerous or vicious dogs, spaying and neutering, exhibitions and displays, and rabies control, shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinances. Local government officials are strongly urged to include shelter standards in local ordinances.
17. ☐Y ☒N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?
Although signs throughout the building interior are both attractive and effective, there is no large, prominent sign on the exterior of the building indicating hours of operation and emergency after hours telephone numbers. This information should be displayed prominently on the exterior of the building.
18. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?
19. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?

C. Records:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are records computerized?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture, location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.
3. ☐Y ☒N Do the animals' records document daily observation?
A record documenting daily observation of each animal is also recommended. This ensures that none of the resident animals are overlooked. This type of record often consists of a checklist, or a list requiring daily data input, such as proportion of food consumed, body weight etc.
4. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?

D. General Structure:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?
The intake area is cluttered with various supplies and equipment. The volume of material stored in intake bays results in the inability of trucks to enter the secure garages. Animals are removed from vehicles in an open-air area that is secured by chain link fencing. Although animals are always removed in cages, LAWC recommends that the shelter clear intake bays to permit animals to be offloaded in an area with an additional level of security.
2. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?
However, additional exterior storage is required.
5. ☒Y ☐N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?
6. ☒Y ☐N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?
7. ☐Y ☒N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?

E. Water and Electric Power:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
5. ☒Y ☐N Is hot water available?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?
7. ☒Y ☐N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
8. ☐Y ☒N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
Inspectors noticed exposed receptacles in the waiting area. Receptacle covers should be installed or inexpensive plastic covers should be inserted.
9. ☒Y ☐N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10. ☒Y ☐N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?
11. ☒Y ☐N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?

12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a restroom for staff use?

F. Waste Disposal:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
3. ☒Y ☐N Do the dog pen floors slope ¼-½ inch per foot toward drains and gutters?
4. ☐Y ☒N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
Solid waste is removed manually.
5. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?

G. Storage:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
5. ☒Y ☐N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6. ☐Y ☒N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?
Some food sacks were stacked too close to walls. Food should be stored at least four (4) inches from the wall to permit appropriate air circulation and prevent early spoilage.
7. ☒Y ☐N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?

H. Primary Enclosures:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is one dog housed per pen?
Except litters and young siblings, or a nursing female with offspring.
2. ☒Y ☐N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?
4. ☒Y ☒N Do the pens have tops on them?
Not all pens have tops. Quarantine and holding pens have tops. Adoptable animals' cages do not have tops.
5. ☒Y ☐N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?

6. ☒Y ☐N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?
8. ☐Y ☒N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
The pens do not communicate, but each housing area is connected to an exercise yard.
9. ☐Y ☐N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?
See above! Although guillotine doors are not present between indoor and outdoor runs, they are employed efficiently in several cages, especially those that are used to house potentially aggressive animals.
10. ☒Y ☐N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
11. ☒Y ☐N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?
13. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?
14. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?

I. Feeding/ Watering:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?

J. Pest Control:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?
2. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?
3. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?
4. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasitocides?

K. Rabies Quarantine

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*
2. ☒ Y ☐ N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?
3. ☒ Y ☐ N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?
4. ☒ Y ☐ N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?
5. ☒ Y ☐ N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
6. ☒ Y ☐ N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
7. ☒ Y ☐ N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
8. ☒ Y ☐ N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem in animals taken into the facility. Your answers should reflect the gravity of the problem in incoming animals, not persistent problems at the facility.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Intestinal parasites |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Scabies (mange) |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Ringworm (dermatophytes) |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Parvovirus |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper |
| 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine cough |
| 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline diarrhea |
| 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine heartworm disease |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline leukemia |

M. Infection Control

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Are all animals isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?
2. ☒ Y ☐ N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?

3. ☒Y ☐N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?
All animals are vaccinated on intake as is recommended as best practices by shelter medicine experts.
4. ☐Y ☒N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
- a. ☒Y ☐N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
5. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
- a. ☐Y ☐N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)
NA since all animals are dewormed.
6. ☒Y ☐N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?
All adopted and reclaimed pets are vaccinated prior to leaving the facility.
7. ☐Y ☐N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?
NA.

N. Population Control

1. ☒Y ☐N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
2. ☐Y ☒N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
3. ☐Y ☐N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?
NA

Additional comments:

The shelter has an arrangement with a non-profit spay neuter clinic. Approximately 40 to 45 spays and neuters are performed each working day. Low cost spays and neuters are also available to the public.

In addition to the presence of a full time staff veterinarian, the shelter contracts with local emergency clinics to provide emergency care to sick or injured animals that may be rescued after normal business hours. An X-ray machine is also maintained at the facility and is used to determine the severity of injuries in animals received at the facility.

A successful adoption program is maintained. All animals are vaccinated upon intake. All animals are microchipped at the time they are spayed or neutered prior to adoption or redemption. The shelter routinely monitors several newspaper and internet sources for lost pet notices and attempts to facilitate reunions with owners. Animals are sometimes placed in "foster" homes to facilitate adoption by through

increased public exposure. Areas are available in the shelter for prospective adopters to acquaint themselves with cats and dogs.

A properly maintained onsite incinerator is used to dispose of animal carcasses. State of the art ventilation systems are present throughout the facility and the structure is clean and spacious. Odors are kept to a minimum. The food is stored in a separate area. Food storage shelves are organized and properly arranged. Food and water bowls are cleaned in a commercial washing unit that ensures sterilization. New Orleans Mosquito and Termite Control experts monitor the facility for pest problems and implement necessary remediation and prevention procedures. Although rodent problems have existed in the past, these procedures have reduced the pest problem to a manageable level. Security cameras are located throughout the structure and the building is effectively secured after normal business hours.

Bathing and drying equipment and facilities are excellent.

An effective infection control program utilizing isolation rooms is employed.

Animals taken into the facility, if not injured or ill, are placed in "healthy hold" for 24 hours, then animals are moved to the general population, quarantine section (potentially dangerous animals), or medical holding. Plentiful hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the facility. Reminders to employees to sanitize after each animal interaction are also plentiful in all animal contact areas. Plexi-glass panels are installed on cage doors to prevent spread of infectious droplets across the aisles. Seamless non-porous flooring is present throughout the facility. This surface is easily sanitized. As stated previously all animals received in the facility are vaccinated for the appropriate canine and feline diseases. Dogs less than one year of age are routinely tested for parvovirus. Cats are tested for feline leukemia virus prior to spaying/neutering and positive animals are removed from the adoptable population. In "sick" wards, cleaning supplies and bedding are maintained in separate containers for each animal, preventing the inadvertent spread of infection on materials shared between cages. A less intense slower/acting form of heartworm treatment is performed on heartworm positive dogs that are adopted.

Another great success is the shelter's effective use of volunteers. Volunteers' skills are utilized to bathe and exercise animals, assist with adoption, etc.

The media in the greater New Orleans area act as partners with the shelter in promoting adoption, publicizing shelter events and assisting in rescue of lost pets.

Offsite adoption events are conducted at least three times per month.

Outdoor exercise areas are located adjacent to each housing area. Sails and shades are strategically placed to protect animals from the sun.

The shelter follows a policy of mandatory five (5) day holding on all stray animal intakes, ten (10) day holding on all quarantine animals, and 24 hour holding on all owner surrenders.

Cat cages feature "transport" boxes that can be utilized not only for transport, but in cage cleaning procedures also.

The temperament or behavioral evaluation program ensures that problem or aggressive animals will not be offered for adoption. Animals are tested for food aggression, fear biting, and overt aggression. This screening is also used to better match pets with prospective adopters.

Very successful education programs are conducted for animals, adults and children. Programs include obedience training, agility exercises, "doggy" yoga,

rally classes, fly ball, and owner responsibility. Summer camps are conducted for local youth. Programs on safety with animals, responsible pet ownership, and spay/neuter are routinely conducted. Enrichment programs for resident animals are conducted and successfully reduce problems with abnormal behaviors resulting from boredom. Dogs are frequently walked by and socialize with volunteers. Toys are provided. Cats are provided with scratch boards.

As of the date of completion of this report, the shelter informed LAWC that corrections had been made in food storage and that the missing tiles in the euthanasia room had been replaced.

LAWC makes the following suggestions for improvements:

- Missing tiles in ceiling of the euthanasia room should be replaced. Cats could escape into the ceiling. Such an event may result in an expensive search and will surely further traumatize the animal involved.
- The area used to house large animals, such as horses, is very small and should be enlarged.
- Many storage areas of the facility are filled to capacity. Additional storage space is required. This may be accomplished with the addition of mobile outdoor storage facilities.
- The shelter does an excellent job of isolating and securing potentially vicious animals, however many cages that housed potentially dangerous animals were not labeled with the yellow caution signs. More signs are needed.
- Some areas of the shelter appeared cluttered. For instance, the entrance to the dog reclamation area was littered with boxes. Addition of storage annexes should alleviate the problem.
- Plastic food and water bowls are utilized in some instances in the shelter. It is preferred to utilize easily sanitized and durable food and water bowls. Stainless steel or non-toxic ceramic bowls are recommended. If plastic bowls are utilized, these items must be checked regularly for pitting and/or damage, and should be replaced if damage is evident.
- A few hoses were noticed on the ground when not in use. Hoses should always be stored on racks or should be retractable to facilitate worker safety.

RATING:

- ☒ Generally exceeds standards
- ☐ Meets standards
- ☐ Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Brian Melius, DVM :

Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee
LAWC

Date: 10-12-11